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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 005319

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS PHUM PTER IN NP AF CE](#)

SUBJECT: INDIA HOPING TO LURE NEPAL MAOISTS INTO POLITICS

REF: A. NEW DELHI 5048

[B](#). NEW DELHI 4531

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a July 11 meeting with MEA Joint Secretary (North) Ranjit Rae, PolCouns emphasized the need to

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coordinate USG and GOI policy to prevent sending mixed messages to the Nepalese political parties, Maoists, and King, and expressed concern about the risks inherent in New Delhi's recent feelers to the insurgents. Rae reassured us that the GOI is strongly opposed to anything that would facilitate Maoist gains, and is trying to press the King to compromise with the parties, but ultimately hopes to bring the Maoists into a political settlement. He said Foreign Secretary Saran will provide U/S Burns with further details

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on this effort. The GOI is skeptical that the parties will participate in municipal elections without real concessions from the Palace. Rae warned that HMGN might interpret an agreement to deploy RNA troops to Afghanistan as part of a quid pro quo for normalization of military supplies from Washington. End Summary.

Rationale for Engaging with the Maoists

[1](#)2. (C) PolCouns summarized the USG position that a political reconciliation between the Palace and the parties is vital for preventing a Maoist takeover in Nepal, reviewed the decision to delay shipment of M-16 rifles for the RNA, and reiterated our stance that US, UK and Indian actions should not in any way encourage the political parties to believe that their interests lie in siding with the Maoists. He reminded Rae that PDAS Camp had expressed concern that reports of GOI facilitation of meetings between party and Maoist leaders could lead the parties to believe that India would support a united front between them (Ref A). Washington believes it is important to avoid allowing any daylight to show between the USG and GOI positions that would allow misinterpretation by the parties, Palace, or Maoists on what the way forward should be, he emphasized.

[1](#)3. (C) Rae assured us that India's "bottom line" is to rid Nepal of the Maoist insurgency, and that the GOI will do nothing to legitimize the Maoists until they renounce violence and become a mainstream, peaceful political party. That being said, he added, a cold assessment reveals that the Maoists and the RNA are in a military stalemate, and the way forward is therefore to bring the Maoists into a political settlement, which would have "implications" for contacts with the GOI and other parties. He reported that Foreign Secretary Saran intends to discuss further GOI actions

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regarding the Maoists with U/S Burns when he meets him in Washington on the margins of PM Manmohan Singh's visit.

[1](#)4. (C) The GOI has heard many reports of "major divisions" within the Maoists, Rae said, describing debates within the leadership over whether to seek to reconcile with the King or the parties, and how to view India's role in Nepal. He speculated that perhaps the Maoists have realized that a military victory over the RNA in the face of US and Indian opposition would be unlikely, and emphasized that any actions New Delhi takes would reinforce the bottom line that the Maoists must renounce violence and participate in a democratic process. In a separate meeting with Poloff on July 11, JNU Professor of South Asian Studies SD Muni, an advocate of political dialogue with the Maoists, reinforced our perception of New Delhi's caution, criticizing the GOI for being unwilling to engage in a substantial dialogue with the Maoists because it was too closely aligned with the USG position.

Worrying Signals from the King

[1](#)5. (C) Rae worried that without some conciliatory gesture from the King to the opposition, the parties and Maoists would coordinate more closely, rhetoric would harden, and compromise between the Palace and parties would be even less likely. He commented that Vice Chairman of the Council of

Ministers Tulsi Giri had told Indian Ambassador Shiv Mukherjee that India ought to choose between one of the "two pillars" of constitutional monarchy and representative democracy, as it was impossible to support both. "My sense is that all the levers of government are being modified to allow direct control by the Palace," Rae commented, pointing to amendments to the Civil Service Act allowing royal appointment instead of merit-based promotions to Secretary-level positions, and rumors in Kathmandu of an

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upcoming ban on political parties or a new constitution. In these circumstance, he added, the political parties will not participate in the planned municipal elections.

16. (C) Ambassador Mukherjee, who walked in on our meeting, is in New Delhi for consultations to prepare the message he will take back to the Palace following GOI meetings with senior Nepalese opposition representatives (Ref B). Rae said that New Delhi intends to maintain pressure on King Gyanendra but remain engaged with him. India's delivery of vehicles, protective vests and other non-lethal supplies on July 2-3 was a signal that the GOI accepts the role of the RNA in fighting terrorism, but not fighting democracy, and is trying to strike a balance that will press the King to compromise without weakening the RNA.

Wary of Maoists' Indian Links

17. (C) The GOI is closely investigating allegations that the June 23 Maoist attack on Madhuban village in Bihar included Nepalese insurgents, but has turned up no evidence supporting that claim, Rae reported. He added that it would be foolish of the Nepalese Maoists to mount operations in India while New Delhi is reviewing its policies. He was similarly skeptical of reports alleging LTTE training of the Maoists, although he did indicate that the Tigers have in the past provided the Maoists and Indian naxalites with IED technology.

RNA to Afghanistan as Part of a Quid Pro Quo?

18. (C) Mentioning reports from Kathmandu that Nepal was considering plans to dispatch RNA units to Afghanistan, Rae told us that he hoped RNA service there would not have any implications for USG policies toward HMGN. The GOI has heard that elements of HMGN and the RNA see Nepalese service in Afghanistan as part of a quid pro quo with the US, Rae said, adding that he hoped the US would be careful to avoid allowing service by RNA units implicated in human rights abuses, particularly as RNA participation in UN peacekeeping operations has come under scrutiny as well. PolCouns noted that these are preliminary conversations that have yet to move into operational channels, and promised to flag Rae's concern about any quid pro quo.

Comment: India Bringing Them Inside the Tent

19. (C) India has successfully transformed several domestic insurgent groups into mainstream political parties over the years, and this experience gives the GOI hope that its goal of co-opting all but the most radical Maoists might bear fruit. The GOI has backed the parties' joint platform as a step to compromise with the Palace, and now seeks to find a way to pressure the King to reciprocate with an offer of his own. In the meantime, as reflected in Rae's candid presentation, the GOI continues to attach a very high priority to its Nepal partnership with Washington.

BLAKE